

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 SCEM-02 OPIC-12 AID-20

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2265

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 0035

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG PINT

SUBJ: ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRANSITION IN CHANGE OF VENEZUELAN

GOVERNMENTS: OIL

REF: CARACAS 11017

1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN CALVANI JANUARY 2 ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF PETROLEUM, I SAID THAT THESE WERE CONTINUING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN U.S. AND VENEZUELA AND NOT SIMPLY A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON AND THE OUTGOING ADMINISTRATION IN CARACAS. I WONDERED IF SOME MECHANISM HAD BEEN ARRANGED FOR AN ORDERLY CHANGE OF OFFICE, INCLUDING BRIEFING FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT BY THE OUTGOING ONE. CALVANI REPLIED THAT WHEN CALDERA HAD TAKEN OFFICE FIVE YEARS AGO, IT HAD BEEN LIKE PULLING TEETH TO GET EVEN A MODICUM OF BRIEFING FROM THE ADECO GOVERNMENT; AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE TRANSFER OF POWER THAT THE INCOMING COPEI MINISTERS COULD EXTRACT MUCH FROM THEIR OUTGOING ADECO COUNTERPARTS.

2. CALVANI THOUGHT THAT THE ONLY WAY REALLY TO MEET THE SITUATION WAS TO ENACT A LAW WHICH WOULD COMPEL ONE ADMINISTRATION TO DEVELOP LIAISON WITH ANOTHER. HOWEVER, EVEN
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IN ABSENCE OF LEGISLATION, CALDERA HAD INSTRUCTED THE SECRETARY

GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY TO GET IN TOUCH WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT PEREZ AT LEAST TO MAKE THE OFFER OF FULL COOPERATION ON CALDERA'S SIDE TO PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION WHICH THE NEW TEAM MIGHT FIND OF VALUE.

3. ON THE SPECIFIC QUESTION OF PETROLEUM AND ECONOMICS IN GENERAL, CALVANI SAID HE COULD ONLY HAZARD A GUESS AS TO WHAT ADVISERS CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ WOULD RELY ON. IN PREVIOUS YEARS HIS CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER HAD BEEN HECTOR HURTADO, BUT, AS WE KNEW, HURTADO HAD RECENTLY UNDERGONE A SERIOUS HEART OPERATION. CALVANI'S PERSONAL GUESS WAS THAT PROBABLY GUMERSINDO RODRIQUEZ, GENERALLY CONSIDERED AN ACKNOWLEDGED AD ECONOMIC EXPERT AND AT PRESENT POLITICAL SECRETARY OF THE AD CENTRAL COMMITTEE, WOULD BE THE MAN TO WHOM CARLOS ANDRES WLD MOST PROBABLY TURN. HE MADE A WRY FACE AND UTTERED A DISPARAGING REMARK WHEN I MENTIONED THE NAME OF ENRIQUE TEJERA PARIS, WH HE SUMMED UP IN THE ONE WORD "DISASTER."

4. WHILE ON THE GENRAL QUESTION OF WHAT TALENTS THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO RELY ON, CALVANI SAID HIS MAIN HOPE W*S THAT CONTINUING TALENT COULD BE FOUND TO STAFF THE CONFERENCE OF LAW OF THE SEA. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT THINK IT LIKELY THAT HIS OWN TALENTS WOULD BE DRAWN ON, HE DID EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT AMBASSADOR AGUILAR WOULD BE THE PRINCIPAL VENEZUELAN DELEGATE AND AGREED WITH ME, WHEN I RECALLED A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH FORMER PRESIDENT BETANCOURT, THAT AGUILAR STANDS VERY HIGH IN THE LATTER'S ESTEEM.

5. COMING BACK TO MATTERS OF HIGH PETROLEUM POLICY AND THE GENERAL THRUST OF OUR DESIRE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL ENERGY ACTION GROUP, I SHOULD LIKE TO HAVE AUTHORITY FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION OF CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ ONCE WE CAN IDENTIFY RESPONSIBLE ADVISERS OR FUTURE MINISTERS ON WHOSE ADVICE ON THESE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS THE PRESIENT-ELECT WILL RELY. I THINK IT UNWISE FOR ME TO TRY TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS DIRECTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT-ELECT, WHO IS GENERALLY UNINFORMED ON QUESTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCE AND TRADE, FOR FEAR THAT IF I PUT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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RIGHT QUESTIONS HE MIGHT GIVE THE WRONG ANSWER.
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Message Attributes

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